



Joan Branson Receives SBA's 2006 Mississippi Minority Small Business Champion Award

The Mississippi Small Business Administration presented Mrs. Joan Branson its 2006 Minority in Business Champion Award. The award is given to an individual whose efforts advance minority small business interests and improve conditions in the minority small business community.

It is said of Joan Branson that "no matter what professional hat she wears, she sets the example and level for others to follow". As Sector Manager and Small Business Liaison Officer for Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, Branson holds a unique position as liaison with SBA and mentor/advocate to hundreds of minority suppliers and small disadvantaged businesses.

Branson's 22 year career has been full of accomplishment and accolades. She has served in numerous, diverse areas within the company - including her

previous position as Subcontract Management Specialist, with an annual expenditure of over \$8.5 million dollars.

Northrop Grumman is one of the world's leading shipbuilders headquartered in Pascagoula, MS and employing over 18,000 professionals across the globe. Branson role fosters closer relationships with minority small businesses therefore developing stronger interrelations with federal, state and local agencies.

She serves as both a mentor and an advocate for minority suppliers, and is known for her enthusiasm, and willingness to help small businesses. She has developed numerous systems, recognition programs, and tools to enhance opportunities for minority suppliers. For example, under Branson's leadership, Northrop Grumman's "Small Disadvantaged Business" expenditures were increased by 80% from 2004 to 2005.

Branson participates in the Northrop Grumman Management Association, and is a member of the American Business Women Association and the Biloxi Diocesan Woman's Commission. She's also a Eucharistic Minister, and Religious Instructor at Saint Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church. She, her husband Terry and children Michelle and Christopher live on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Branson was nominated by Glenn Lynd, Director of Material Acquisitions at Northrop Grumman Ship Systems.

Branson is one of ten award winners honored during a luncheon at the Imperial Palace Hotel & Casino in Biloxi, MS on June 20th. The SBA Awards Luncheon Program was hosted by the Mississippi Business Journal, Coast Coca-Cola Bottling, BellSouth Services, Northrop Grumman, and Harrah's Entertainment/Grand Biloxi.

For more information on Small Business Week or if you would like to nominate yourself or someone for a 2007 SBA small business award, visit the Mississippi SBA website at www.sba.gov/ms.